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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 CAIRO 004317

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [ECON](#) [FAID](#) [EG](#) [IZ](#)

SUBJECT: IRAQ: ARAB LEAGUE TO ATTEND BRUSSELS MINISTERIAL
AND SUPPORT IRAQ'S POLITICAL PROCESS

REF: STATE 103222

Classified by ECPO Counselor John Desrocher for reasons 1.4
(b) and (d).

Summary

[11.](#) (C) Post delivered reftel demarche to Arab League
Secretariat Chief of Staff Hesham Yousef June 7, urging the

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Arab League and its members to do as much as possible to support the Iraqi Transitional Government (ITG) in the run-up to, and beyond, the June 22 ministerial conference in Brussels. Yousef confirmed receipt of an invitation to the Brussels meeting and said that Arab League Secretary General Moussa would attend. Yousef also confirmed recent press reports suggesting that the League would establish diplomatic representation in Baghdad but would not commit to a date. He noted that it would be easier for the League to encourage its member states to open/expand diplomatic ties once the League has set up in Baghdad. Yousef said that Arab specialized agencies would meet in Cairo during July where they would address an agenda item entitled, "Assistance to the Iraqi People." On inviting a senior Iraqi Government figure to address a session of the Arab League, Yousef said that the League was prepared to do so. End summary.

Arab League Office in Baghdad?

[12.](#) (C) During a June 7 meeting with Arab League Chief of Staff, Hesham Yousef, Post delivered reftel demarche on deliverables for the June 22 Brussels International Conference on Iraq, in addition to pressing for regional support for advancing the peace process (septel). On Iraq, Yousef confirmed that Arab League Secretary General Amre Moussa had told Iraqi Foreign Minister Zebari during a May 25 phone conversation that the League would establish a representational office in Baghdad and send a legal expert to assist in the constitution-drafting exercise. Pressed on content and timing, Yousef said that the League had committed to sending a "permanent delegation" but had not yet determined the precise designation (i.e., "a mission, or office, etc."), nor the exact timing of their arrival. He said that the League needed to recruit staff for the office - not an easy task, he said, due to security concerns.

[14.](#) (C) Poloff urged the League Secretariat to strongly encourage its member states to establish diplomatic ties with Iraq. While expressing support, Yousef admitted that the League has not pressed hard on this issue since the League has yet to establish its own representation inside Iraq. Once such representation is present on the ground, he said, it will be easier for the League to prompt others to follow suit. He cautioned that League members are reluctant to set up in Baghdad due to security fears. Poloff strongly encouraged the League to move as quickly as possible to arrange its representation in Baghdad in order to set an example for its members to follow.

League Specialized Agencies to Support Iraq

[15.](#) (C) Yousef stressed that the Arab League had communicated to the Iraqi Government on several occasions its willingness to do "exactly what they request us to do." Iraqi Foreign Minister Zebari had spoken with Moussa on the phone May 25 and Iraqi MFA senior official Ambassador Hamoud met Moussa in Cairo June 2 on the margins of a Steering Group committee meeting planning the Brussels conference (septel). Both privately and publicly, the League was stressing a message of normalized relations with Iraq. Citing one example of how Moussa was publicly supporting the government in Iraq, Yousef said that at the recent Arab-Latin American summit in Brasilia, Moussa welcomed in his opening address only one President - Iraqi President Talabani. Similarly, the Arab League group of specialized agencies (approximately 22 agencies in all fields of work) planned to meet in Cairo in mid-July. At this meeting, the League had agreed to add as an agenda item, "Assistance to the Iraqi People." Asked if

there was anything the USG or Iraq could do to ensure the success of this event, Yousef replied that a strong showing by senior Iraqi officials and a clear presentation of its needs would be most helpful.

Encouraging Senior Iraqi ITG Figure to Speak at League

16. (C) Responding to reftel talking point regarding inviting a senior ITG figure to address a session of the Arab League in Cairo, Yousef said that the League was "home to all its members," and that all the Iraqis had to do was request such a meeting or event. "This is their house, he added, and they are "welcome at any time." They can address Permanent Representatives, the September Council of Ministers meeting, or come for a visit at any time, he said. Poloff urged the League to be proactive and seek out an Iraqi leader to address the League.

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